



City of DeWitt

822 - 6th Avenue

P.O. Box 407 • DeWitt, Iowa 52742-0407 • (319) 659-3811 • FAX (319) 659-3355

MEMBER IOWA LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES

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MAYOR
Leo Maynard

November 6, 1997

CITY
ADMINISTRATOR
Cary Conger

Mr. William Kennard
Chairman Designate
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

CITY ATTORNEY
Robert J. McGee

Ex Parte Letter re: Cases WT 97-187 ¹⁹² MM Docket 97-182, and DA 96-2140

FINANCE CLERK/
TREASURER
Deanna Rodriguez

Dear Chairman Kennard:

CITY CLERK
Sharon K. Albers

Please terminate all action in the preceding cases. They attempt to make the FCC the "Federal Zoning Commission" for cellular and broadcast towers and violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism.

DIRECTOR OF
PUBLIC WORKS
Richard A. Mohr

Congress and the courts have long recognized that zoning is a matter of peculiarly local concern. The FCC has no zoning knowledge or expertise and is not accessible to most citizens.

CHIEF OF POLICE
Richard L. Peasley

For these reasons and others, Congress expressly preserved local zoning authority over cellular towers in the 1996 Act. Now the FCC is trying to get this jurisdiction back by issuing rules which improperly infringe on local zoning authority.

COUNCIL
William J. Lego
Max C. Matthiesen
Margaret A. McAvan
Verlyn Scheckel
Steve H. Thiltgen

The FCC's efforts to assume jurisdiction over any local zoning matter where RF radiation is mentioned is unacceptable. The FCC ignores the fact that we cannot necessarily control the statements citizens make during meetings of our legislative bodies. Many municipalities, by state or local law, are required to allow citizens to speak on any topic they wish, even on items that are not on the agenda. This is a part of what local government is all about.

Some of our citizens may be concerned about radiation from cellular towers. For the reasons just described we cannot necessarily prevent them from mentioning their concerns to us. The FCC's attempt to use this as a means to seize zoning authority and reverse local decisions violates basic principles of Federalism, Freedom of Speech and the rights of our citizens to petition their government.

This is particularly true if a municipality expressly says it is not considering such statements (that go beyond the radiation authority Congress left with municipalities) and the decision is completely valid on other grounds, such as the impact of the tower on property values or aesthetics.

For similar reasons the FCC cannot "second guess" the reasons for a municipality's decision. The FCC, like the courts, is bound by the stated reasons given by a municipality. Either these reasons are



sufficient to uphold the decision or they are not. The FCC cannot "second guess" a municipality's true reasons any more than the courts can "second guess" the true reasons for the FCC's decisions.

The FCC'S proposal to ban moratoria on cellular towers is objectionable for many of the reasons set forth above. it also fails to recognize that for some municipalities moratoria are a well recognized zoning tool, particularly while they revise zoning ordinances. More importantly, Congress took away the FCC's authority over cellular tower zoning, and this includes moratoria.

Similarly, please terminate the FCC's proposed rulemaking preempting local zoning of broadcast towers. As you well know, broadcast towers can be over 2,000 feet high--they are some of the tallest structures known to man. It is therefore astounding that you would propose that municipalities can't consider the impact of such towers on property values, the environment or aesthetics and that even safety considerations take second place. Safety always has to be the first priority.

And setting artificial time limits for municipalities to act on environmental, zoning and building permit approvals for such towers serves no useful purpose. It is a violation of the U.S. Constitution, the Communications Act and Federalism for you to put time limits on municipalities to act on all local approvals and then state that all such applications will be automatically deemed granted if we don't act within this timeframe, even if the application is incomplete or violates state or local law.

The FCC should consider how it would react if it was told that any broadcast license application would be automatically deemed granted unless the FCC acted on it within 21 to 45 days; that this rule applied whether or not the application was complete; whether or not the applicant was foreign or domestically owned or otherwise qualified; or even whether the frequencies were available. And the rule would apply without regard to whether the tower for the station was at the end of an airport runway, in a wetland or in a historic district.

For these reasons the proposed actions all violate the Communications Act and the Constitution. Please terminate all these proceedings without taking the actions proposed therein.

Sincerely,


Leo Maynard
Mayor

cc: Mr. William F. Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission (6 copies)
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

cc: [see attached]

List of Copies

Commissioner Designate Harold Furchtgott-Roth
1919 M Street, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Designate Michael Powell
1919 M Street, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Designate Gloria Tristani
1919 M Street, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Susan Ness
1919 M Street, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20554

Shaun A. Maher, Esq.
Policy & Rules Branch
Commercial Wireless Division
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
2025 M Street
Washington, DC 20554

Mr. Keith Larsen
Assistant Bureau Chief for Engineering
Policy & Rules Division
Mass Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington, DC 20554

Ms. Susanna Swerling
Policy & Rules Division
Mass Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington, DC 20554

Ms. Rosalind Allen, Deputy Chief
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
2025 M Street
Washington, DC 20554

Mr. Dan Phythyon
Acting Chief
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
2025 M Street
Washington, DC 20554

Mr. Roy J. Stewart
Chief
Mass Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington, DC 20554

Ms. Barrie Tabin
Legislative Counsel
National League of Cities
1301 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
6th Floor
Washington, DC 20004

Ms. Eileen Huggard
Executive Director, NATOA
1650 Tysons Boulevard, Suite 200
McLean, VA 22102-3915

Mr. Robert Fogel
Associate Legislative Director
National Association of Counties
440 First Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Mr. Kevin McCarty
Assistant Executive Director
U.S. Conference of Mayors
1620 Eye Street, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Ms. Cheryl Maynard
Government Affairs Coordinator
American Planning Association
1776 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20036